



PRESS RELEASE

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Mass. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster Sets Up Hurricane Volunteer Hotline

BOSTON -- To address the Hurricane Irene damage, Massachusetts' voluntary non-profit disaster response coalition has set up a website and call-in number to organize volunteers who want to assist in disaster relief efforts, most of which will be needed in Western Mass.

Massachusetts Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (MA VOAD) asks people who want to help to either log in as a volunteer on the Boston Cares website, www.bostoncares.org or to call them at [617\) 422-0910 ext. 213](tel:617-422-0910). At the same time, people who need assistance can call 211 which is set up by MA VOAD member organization, The United Way.

"Many people want to help but don't know where to go or what skills are needed," said Chris Farrand, MA VOAD Executive Director and Salvation Army official.

"Massachusetts VOAD has created a system wherein we can find those in need while sending those with appropriate skills to help. It's a win win situation that has been in

place during last year's floods, the recent tornadoes and the current hurricane."

Along with activating volunteers, the many non-profit, religious organizations and private sector associate members of MA VOAD have been directly assisting state disaster victims by running shelters, fixing mold problems, removing debris, feeding and clothing those in need, giving counseling and much more. The coalition coordinates with each other as well as with local, state and federal emergency management agencies to ensure help is delivered in the most efficient way possible.

"Many of the Mass. VOAD organizations have unique skills and training during disaster response," said Erine Lace Garland of Boston Cares. "The Boston Cares affiliate network is statewide which allows us to assist people in the wake of Irene which caused damage throughout Massachusetts and we are honored to help."

The Massachusetts Statewide Disaster Relief Fund is accepting cash donations through the United Way of Tri-County, www.unitedwaytri-county.org/disaster. Checks should be made out to The Massachusetts Disaster Relief Fund, please indicate Hurricane Irene on the check, and mail to: United Way of Tri-County, 46 Park Street, Framingham, MA 01702. Cash donations may also be made to any MA VOAD organization of your choice at www.massvoad.org.

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